in front of a self-portrait of Gericault that the Louvre has just bought. In the gallery of Greco-Roman frescoes I encounter Vuillard and Vallotton.

Sunday

A trying day, which sets me back. Fortunately I was able to read and write until noon; then little Gerard P. came to lunch, and from then until evening I didn't have a minute to myself.

The hope of a more curious—that is, more indiscreet—conversation made me detain little Gerard until four o'clock. But with him I am like the cat of the fable who wanted to see the other side of the mirror. What seems depth or mystery in him is merely reflection.

Gerard is flabbergasted, on reading Michelet's *Louis XIV,* to learn that the King had so many mistresses. He boasts of not being influenced by anything. "I read this book" *(Les Aventures du Roi Pausole}^* he says, "and a quarter of an hour later I don't think about it any more; it's just as if I hadn't read it." He sees this as strength of character; I see it as insensitivity. A superficial relationship with people and things is enough for him. He never longs to say to anyone anything different from what he does say.

I do not expect any great surprises from him; and yet I don't expect much from him.

We go into the Guimet Museum. I had planned to spend the best part of the day there, but Gerard, aided by the absurd Sunday crowd, spoils my pleasure. T merely make a flying visit to make sure that I must come again.

At Jacques Blanche's house. Gradually night invades the huge calm studio.

Blanche tells me of his irritation, at lunch, at hearing that big fool Lebey constantly interrupt Barres, without every suspecting that what

he says interests only himself.

Left alone, Jacques Blanche and I go over our common friends and polish off certain celebrities. We take to pieces Bourget and Wyzewa, whom Blanche depicts moreover as two remarkable minds, "much more remarkable than their books would lead one to believe." That's too bad. Blanche asserts that all the great minds he has known were marvelous conversationalists. Ah, Jacques Blanche, my friend, how little regard you should have for me! You tell me that my way of talking is among those that interest you. I wonder, and have often asked you, what you could possibly find in it, when everything I say interests me so little myself, when, as soon as I begin a story, my only anxiety is to end it as quickly as possible.

[14] *The Adventures of King Pausolus,* a risqu6, humorous novel (1900) by Gide's early friend Pierre Louys.